

REMARKS

OF

MR. DUNCAN, OF OHIO,

ON

THE RIGHT OF PETITION:

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

JANUARY, 6, 1844.

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## REMARKS.

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Mr. DUNCAN said he was pleased to have an opportunity to set himself right before those he had the honor to represent, as well as the country generally, on the subject of abolition. Some years since, on the eve of an election, when a candidate for a seat in this House, the executive committee for the abolitionists of his district addressed him a communication in writing, containing sundry interrogatories respecting the right of petition, the right of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, &c. In my answer, (said Mr. D.) I recognised the right of petition as sacred and guaranteed by the Constitution, and claimed on the part of the people the right to judge for what to petition. I deprecated slavery in the abstract, as an evil in itself, a political evil, and an evil to the slaveowner. I also denounced modern abolitionism as an evil, as I understood it, and a plan of emancipation which I thought could not be consummated without evil to the slaves, evil to the country, and violence to the slaveholder, &c. Party spirit, at that time, ran high; and everything was seized, by Whig demagogues, out of which political capital could be manufactured; and, for that purpose, the response in question was garbled, and that portion of it which recognised the right of petition, and exposed the evils of slavery, was published in many of the Federal newspapers, with comments which the entire letter would not have warranted; and those garbled extracts and false comments were displayed by every unswerving Whig whiffet that could mount a two-foot stump, to prove that I was an abolitionist. It is for this reason that I have embraced the present opportunity to show my true position on the subject of abolition, as well as to show why I believe the twenty-first rule should be stricken out. That rule prohibits the introduction of abolition petitions, without exception or qualification.

The gentleman from North Carolina, [Mr. CLINGMAN]—who made, yesterday, one of the most sensible speeches I have ever heard made in this House on the subject of abolition—called the attention of the House to one fact, which, if properly understood and properly appreciated, must convince every one, in this House and out of it, that the twenty-first rule should no longer exist. That fact is this: that it excludes the people of the District of Columbia from petitioning Congress on the subject of slavery. If there were no other objection to that rule, this alone, it seems to me, makes it imperious on us to abolish it. The District of Columbia, to all intents and purposes, is a State, and possesses all the rights, powers, and sovereignty, politically considered, and in point of government, that any State in this Union possesses. Congress is the legitimate and constitutional Legislature of this District, and

possesses the same legislative powers over the District, that the several Legislatures possess over their States. And the people of this District have the same privilege, right, and power, to claim at the hands of Congress such legislation for the redress of their grievances, and the advancement of their local and general interests, that the people of the States have upon their respective Legislatures. This position will not be denied. Suppose that a majority of the people of one of the slave States of this Union should become convinced that slavery is an evil, and that it retarded the progress of the State, and that its prosperity would be advanced by the abolition of slavery: what would be the course and first step of its citizens to abolish slavery? Would it not be to petition the Legislature to take such order as might be deemed most expedient to consummate an object so desirable? Would any Legislature, under such circumstances, and in such a case, dare to adopt a rule that no petitions should be received in favor of the abolition of slavery? Why, sir, the adoption of such a rule, under such circumstances, would produce instant revolution. Such a violation of the sacred and constitutional right of petition would shake the community and the Republic to its foundation. An indignant community would scout from the legislative halls such a representation.

Now, sir, does it require any great stretch of the imagination to suppose that the people in the District of Columbia may some day become convinced that slavery is an evil, and that it exists in violation of philanthropy, humanity, patriotism, natural rights, and personal liberty, as well as political and domestic economy; and that the interests and prosperity of the District, equally with the principles of humanity and patriotism, require its abolition? Many other States in the Union have come to such conclusions and determinations, and, through their Legislatures, have consummated them. Why may not the State of Columbia? The people have the natural, political, and constitutional right to do so. How dare we, then, interfere, for a day or a moment, with their right to do so? Have we a right to meet the people of this District at the threshold of this hall, with a rule, and say to them, you shall introduce no petition into this hall on the subject of slavery?

Mr. Speaker, with this view of the subject—and I am able to come to no other from which I can draw correct conclusions—I must say, unequivocally, that any rule that prohibits the people of the District of Columbia from petitioning Congress for the abolition of slavery within this District is a violation of the Constitution and of their rights.

I am opposed to the continuance of the 21st rule on the grounds of expediency and economy. It will not be contradicted on this floor, when I assert that two-thirds of this session, so far, has been consumed in abolition squabbles; not alone with abolition petitions, but by petitions and discussions on behalf of the right to petition. Surely, the people, at whose expense we legislate, and to promote whose interests and welfare we are assembled, will not long tolerate such a worthless and extravagant sacrifice of time, at so great an expense of their means, to the almost entire exclusion of the substantial business for which they have sent us. Our time is theirs; our duties are at their disposal; and we are bound, by every principle of duty to them, and of duty to our station, and the oath we have taken, to dispatch the business we have been sent to do in as short a time, and as cheap a rate, as possible.

It will be urged that if the people of the free States have no constitutional and legitimate right to petition on the subject of slavery in the District of Columbia, Congress is not bound to receive their petitions. This objection is not without force; but I answer, so long as the people claim to be the judges of their grievances and the judges of what is proper to petition upon, the objection will be without effect. Hence it is we receive petitions every day for grants which Congress has no power to bestow, and yet petitions have not been rejected on that account.

I do not believe that the people of other States have a right to interfere with the slave institutions of the State of Columbia, any more than they have to interfere with the institutions of each other; consequently, I do not think that the people of the free States have a right to petition Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia; because the sovereignty of the District is as complete as that of any other State in the Union. And so complete do I consider the sovereignty and independence of the State of Columbia, and of each and every State in this Union—I mean sovereign and independent within themselves, and sovereign and independent of each other—that I repeat, the citizens of one State, either in their individual or in their corporate capacity, have no right to interfere in the institutions, customs, usages, or laws, (not in violation of the Federal Constitution,) of another. So far do I carry this doctrine, that I maintain that there would be as much propriety in the people of the free States of this Union in petitioning the autocrat of all the Russias to ameliorate the condition of, or to emancipate, the serfs of his vast dominions. Permit me to illustrate further: when a boy, I was taught many lessons of morality and religion by parents who are now, I trust, reaping a reward in a higher and better world than this. One of those lessons was of Divine command—it was an order that we should do all our work in six days, and rest the seventh. We are commanded by that order, not only to rest ourselves and cease from labor, but we are commanded to permit our man and our maid servants to rest. The command runs further—we are to let our animals rest. This, I repeat, is a Divine command—a law paramount to all other laws, it transcends all commands, and extends over the Creator's dominions. And yet, in the face of this law, and in defiance of Omnipotence, the people of Ohio, without distinction, (and, perhaps, of some of the other States,) are in the habit of working their horses, mules, and oxen, on that sacred day. They will ride them under the saddle with whip and spur, and drive them in carriages or wagons

under the lash. They will ride them or drive them in this profane manner many miles to public worship, or places less worthy; tie them up for hours with nothing to eat but beech bark or stake oats, and return home in the same cruel and profane manner. Kentucky is Ohio's elder sister, and might feel disposed to exercise some guardianship over her morals and her religious institutions. Suppose the people of Kentucky were to take it into their heads that the people of Ohio were setting at defiance one of the Almighty's sacred and imperious commands, in thus cruelly and unlawfully enslaving their animals on that sacred day assigned for the rest of everything that lives, and in the exercise of a duty which they might think they owed to their God and their conscience, should pour in petitions by hundreds and thousands to the Ohio Legislature, praying to abolish a practice so fraught with evil and impiety, viz: that of working animals on the Sabbath day: is there any man in his senses who would not look upon such a proceeding as the result of fanaticism and religious mania? Is there any person who would not look upon it as an officious intermeddling with the concerns and institutions of Ohio, unwarranted by the Constitution of our country, and a violation of her rights and sovereignty? And yet there would be no more political impropriety in it, no more inconsistency in it, than for one State to interfere with the slave institutions of another. Am I to be told that the negro and the horse, or the mule, are not to be compared, or put upon the same footing? True, they are not, in one sense; but in another, they are. In one sense, the one is a responsible human being, the other is an irresponsible brute. But when they are put on the footing of property, they are the same; the slave of Kentucky is as much the property of his master as the "horse of Ohio is the property of his owner; and the same character of laws which defends the possession of the one, defends the possession of the other." I do not say that such a state of things should exist; but it does exist. I speak of things as they are, not as they should be; and if it is desired to change them, they must be changed by moral and patriotic influences, and not by unconstitutional legislation. If the philanthropists of this country desire that slavery should be abolished, they must take a new start. They must operate upon the minds of the people: and if it is desired that the District of Columbia should be the first theatre of their experiments, they must commence with the people. It is with them they must first operate; and if they can succeed in convincing them that slavery is an evil and a curse, and that the laws of humanity, patriotism, and the Christian religion, as well as their present prosperity and future welfare, all unite in demanding the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, the people of the District will petition Congress to abolish it. Then will abolition petitions demand and receive the favorable action of Congress. I say that Congress will be bound to act favorably on petitions in favor of the abolition of slavery in this District, when the people of this District, or a majority of them, shall petition for it. It is the people of this District, and them alone, that have the right to petition; and the right in them to petition imposes the duty on Congress not only to act, but to act in obedience to the prayers of the petitioners. My conclusion, then, is, that the power to abolish slavery in this District is with the people of the District and with Congress—the first to will, and the latter to do.

I will, in a short time, speak of the policy and expediency of the general abolition of slavery. I desire first to say that I am opposed to the existence of this twenty-first rule, because I am opposed to modern abolitionism as I understand it. This rule manufactures abolitionists and abolitionism. All laws, rules, and restraints, which abridge what are regarded as constitutional privileges, increase the anxiety to exercise those privileges, whatever they may be. It is so with this restraint upon the supposed right of petition on the subject of slavery.

The people believe they have a right to petition Congress, for so says the Constitution. They believe they have a right to judge of their own grievances, and on what subjects they have a right to petition. They believe that the right of petition implies and carries with it the duty to legislate. They also believe, that to receive their petitions and lay them on the table, is about equal to laying them under the table, and tantamount to rejecting them, and is a violation of that legislative duty which the right to petition imposes on the Legislature. Would it not save time here, and would it not concur with the generally received opinions of the right of petition and the duties of legislation, to receive abolition petitions, refer them, and report upon them, and give reasons why their prayers cannot be granted? Such was the course pursued with the Sunday-mail petitions, and by that course was the subject put to sleep, never, it is hoped, again to wake. Should such a course be adopted, no committee will be found in this House, so lost to themselves, to their duty, their oath, and the Constitution, as to make any other than an unfavorable report; and a report, though unfavorable, if founded on the Constitution and illustrated with reason, will do more to put down this fanatic philanthropy (if it deserves so good name) than any other means which can be devised. And if that report be made, whether favorable or unfavorable, the South will witness a vote of this House that will convince them that their institutions are safe.

It is much easier to make the mass of the people understand that a given prayer cannot be granted, than that they have no right to pray at all. Common sense reason is sufficient for the former; but it requires metaphysical reasoning to effect the latter—which a common sense man cares but little to hear. Abstractions and metaphysics have but little favor with the mass of the people, and never can be made to take the place of common sense. Southern gentlemen here never can succeed in convincing the people that they have not the right to petition Congress on any and all subjects; nor can they convince them that they are not competent to judge of what they shall petition for. This 21st rule puts it in the power of abolitionists to raise the cry of persecution. They complain that the doors of Congress are shut against them. They say that Congress has set itself above the people—that its members are no longer their representatives, but their dictators. Such is the cry raised by this rule. Hence the flood of petitions for the repeal of this rule. Before the adoption of this rule, we were flooded with abolition petitions; now, we are flooded with abolition petitions, and a flood of petitions for the repeal of the 21st rule. Then we had a single flood; now we have a double flood, still more desolating and destructive of time. If it is desired to diminish abolitionism, or prevent the multiplication of abolitionists, abolish the 21st rule.

It is insisted by the advocates of abolition, that the question of slavery in the District of Columbia

occupies different ground from slavery in the slave States. Not so. The States of Virginia and Maryland had the power, and exercised it, of ceding a portion of the territory of each to the Federal Government, for the purpose of a site for the Government; the Federal Government had a right to, and did, accept. But neither Maryland nor Virginia had the power to change the character of the property, either personal or real, of the citizens who occupied the portions of territory so ceded; nor did Congress acquire any right over the property of the citizens of the ceded territory, which the Legislatures of Virginia and Maryland did not possess when the cession was made. The Legislatures of Virginia and Maryland had not then, nor have they now, the power to abolish slavery in their respective States, without the consent of a majority of the citizens of their respective States; and Congress could acquire no right by the cession which the ceding party had not the power to grant; and this brings me to the position which I before assumed, viz: that when a majority of the people of the District of Columbia shall will the abolition of slavery within their District, Congress will have power to execute their will, and not before. The question of the abolition of slavery has become a subject of such general interest that it is time to begin to consider the policy of such a measure. It is time to examine and expose the effects upon the community, as well in the slave States as those not so; also, what effect such a change would have upon the slaves themselves. Suppose that this new-born philanthropy should run so high, and spread so wide, as to effect an emancipation of all the slaves in the United States, what will be the result? I believe the entire black population is over three millions. The result, then, would be, to turn loose upon society, and overspread the country with three millions of ragamuffins, paupers, beggars, thieves, robbers, assassins, and desperadoes; all, or nearly so, penniless and destitute, without skill, means, industry, or perseverance to obtain a livelihood; each and all possessing, brooding, cherishing, and spreading, revenge for supposed or real wrongs. I ask, sir, could the most fruitful imagination, or the wildest fancy, picture scenes more horrible than would follow such a state of things? No man's fireside, no man's person, no man's family, no man's property, would be safe by day or night. It now requires the whole energies of the law, and the whole vigilance of the police of all our principal cities, to restrain and keep in subordination the few straggling free negroes which now infest them. What, then, I repeat, would be the consequence of a general emancipation? Sir, every man would have to make laws for his own defence; every man would be his own police; every man would have to defend his gate while his family would sleep. I know of no plan that could be adopted, which would be more likely to result in the extermination of the African race in America, than to restore them to immediate and unconditional freedom; and such, I believe, is the wish of the modern abolitionists. I think the abolitionist should pause in his wild and reckless career, when he reflects that a consummation of his plans must result in the extermination of the subjects of his mistaken philanthropy; for, as sure as the day comes that his plans are consummated, without means of removal and colonization, (and I believe the abolitionist proposes neither,) every man will have to be a soldier and a sentinel, and the watch-word and coun-

tersign will be, "Straight hair and a white skin;" without which, no one will be permitted to pass the line: negroes will be shot as beasts of prey.

Permit me to ask the abolitionist, in the spirit of candor and sincerity, what disposition is to be made of the negroes when emancipated? Are they to be made American citizens? Are they to be identified with the white family? They are unequalled for the former, and every American feeling abhors and sickens at the latter. Our free institutions and our noble political fabric have cost too much to be intrusted, even in part, to the care of the stupid African. He neither possesses the intellect nor the vigilance that qualifies him for the rights of an American citizen; and their nature forbids that they should form a part of the white family. His color, his formation, and above all, the fog and almost opaque effluvia that surround his body, make it impossible that he should ever be the associate and companion of the white man. The negro is doomed to degradation, whether in slavery or in freedom, on any other soil and in any other climate than that of Africa. The philanthropist will ask, are the evil and the curse of slavery to be perpetuated? I answer, sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. There is a Providence who, in His own time, will correct the evil, and that correction will be made through human agency by His power and wisdom, and directed by His sovereign will; and it will be done in such a manner as to save and protect our free institutions, which were established and guided by His wisdom; and it will be done, too, it is to be hoped, without subjecting the African-American race to the perils and almost sure extermination which modern abolition would do if consummated.

If it is not the intention of abolitionists to permit the negroes, when emancipated, to remain in and overspread the country, is it their intention to ship them to Africa? If so, I ask, would that better their condition? Would they not again become the prey of other nations? It now requires the united force of the British and American navies, at an immense national expense, to defend the coasts of Africa from slavers without; and if that principle of national philanthropy were complete, it would require as great an expense to defend them within from being made the prey, the slaughter, the pillage, and the plunder of each other; to all of which the American negroes would be subject were they transported to Africa. Will it be contended that they would rear and support a free and independent Government, which would secure peace and happiness to them? If they would, it would be the first time since they have been a race. They never have sustained either a free government or Christian institutions. They seem to be made for petty despotism, and pagan religion. There is no instance where they have ever maintained a free government or Christian institutions for any considerable length of time, unassisted and unprotected by the white man. In every instance where it has been attempted, they have become bankrupt in morals, bankrupt in politics, bankrupt in religion, and bankrupt in finance. There is no part of the globe in which the Christian religion has been planted where it has not taken root, grown, and flourished, and brought forth its fruits, except in Africa; and here, as often as it has been tried, it has withered and died.

When Christianity supplanted paganism in Rome, the Christian religion was carried, with the Roman

arms, to every part of her dominions. Roman conquests and the Christian religion went hand in hand from the time Rome embraced Christianity. Africa had her share: the cross adorned upwards of five hundred churches in Africa, if I have read history correctly. Those churches were partially occupied, and maintained a kind of show of Christian religion, while the Roman standard was planted in Africa; while the Roman eagles defended them; but no sooner did they take flight, than the Christian churches became the abodes of paganism. When Rome crumbled and fell a prey to the northern barbarians, the Christian churches and the Christian religion in Africa fell a prey to the pagan gods.

Why is it that the Christian doctrine and free government can have no place in Africa? It is because the African wants the mind to understand and appreciate the one, and the energy and love of liberty to maintain and defend the other.

I suppose, by the generally received opinion, we are bound to believe that the African race is of the human family, and that they are the sons and daughters of the same Adam and Eve from which the white man has descended. It is a perplexing difficulty to account for the wide difference which exists between the white man and the negro, as well in symmetry of body as in strength and vigor of mind. Some eminent and talented writers have given the negro a place in the scale of creation between the white man and the animal creation; and such is the contrast, that it is difficult to prove the supposition erroneous. One thing is sure; and that is, that the negro is as far below the white man in symmetry of body, beauty of person, strength of judgment, and vigor of mind, as the orang outang of Borneo is below the negro.

If the universal philanthropist is asked, what has produced this mental and physical difference between the white man and the negro? his answer will be, that it is the force and influence of soil, climate, customs, habits, laws, and usages; and he will present abundance of geographical and biblical arguments in support of his reasons. I am not disposed to dispute the question, whether the African has, or has not, descended from the same Adam and Eve; but that Bible from which the philanthropist draws his strongest reasons in favor of the affirmative, gives this world an age of six thousand years; within which time this great difference has been effected. But I am unwilling that the entire age of the world shall be allowed for this change; the philanthropist must bring his calculations within one-half (3000 years) for sacred writ informs us that Moses had a black wife, from which we must infer the negroes were black at that early day. The Carthaginians organized regiments of African negroes in their wars with the Greeks and Romans. The negroes were then black, and as stupid as they are now. But little confidence was placed either in their skill or courage. They were put in the front of the battle, to prevent flight, and were always offered by Carthaginians.

The Romans were in the habit of making slaves of a part of those they conquered, but they never made slaves of the Africans, (or to no great extent,) for the reason that they were too stupid and lazy; and for the reason, too, that their persons were offensive. The beautiful Greek, and the haughty and lofty Asiatic, were their slaves; so that the African was not only black at that time, but he was then, as he is now, stupid, lazy, and suffocatingly offensive. I have a question to put to the venerable gentleman

from Massachusetts, [Mr. ADAMS.] It is a hard question to answer; but if there is any man in this world who can answer it, he is that man. I will put the question in the rule of three, but I will not confine him to that rule to find the answer. He may take what rule he pleases, either in morals, or mathematics, geography, ethics, or Scripture; and if the venerable gentleman should find any difficulty in solving the question, perhaps he can draw upon his "friend and pitcher," my colleague, [Mr. GIDDINGS,] who is posted in the rear, who thinks and acts with him in all questions that appertain to the political rights and domestic condition of the negro. And now to the question; but first a prelude. It is upwards of three hundred years since the Portuguese commenced the slave trade; from that time to the present, nearly all of Europe and the Americas (since their discovery) have been over-spread with slavery and with negroes. From that time to this have the negroes and their descendants enjoyed the benefits of European climate, European laws, customs, habits, and usages; and yet the negro and his descendants are the same as when he was first introduced. No perceptible change has been produced. His skull is as thick; his hair is as kinky, his nose as flat, his lips as large, his shin as crooked, his heel as long, his foot as flat, and his skin as black, as they were the day he was first introduced. About the same time, or before the introduction of slavery, the Portuguese made settlements on the coasts and in the interior of Africa. Those settlements have been occupied by Europeans from that time to the present; and, although they have lived under the same sun that made the African black, and have trod the same sands that made his foot flat, yet the European remains as he was when he was first introduced, without assuming any one feature, either in mind or body, of the negro; and this leads me to the question which I desire the venerable gentleman to answer. It is this: If the climate, the laws, the usages and customs of Europe, will do nothing to change the mental and physical character of the negro in three hundred years, what change would six thousand years—the supposed age of the world—produce? But another question presents itself, and which, I presume, may be answered by the same rule. It is: If the influence of the same sun which turned the African black, and stamped on him all the characteristics of the negro, has produced no change on the European for the term of three hundred years, what change would six thousand years—the supposed age of the world—effect? Now, sir, the negro is or is not the brother of the white man. If he is, that extraordinary difference which I have attempted to portray, and which exists, can be accounted for; and if he is, he comes in, by Divine authority, and by the command of the Saviour of mankind, for an equal participation of that brotherly love which we owe to each other; but if he is not, it is vain to attempt to impose him upon the American white man, as entitled to all the rights and privileges of an American citizen and Christian brother; for he is incapable of appreciating the privileges of an American citizen, or of enjoying the brotherly love of a Christian. He is incapable of defending the rights of an American citizen, or of appreciating the value of the Christian religion.

Let no honest man, who is serious in his desire that slavery should be abolished—who thinks his reasons are well founded, and who has no other object to serve than that which he professes—take

exceptions to what I say against abolition and abolitionists. The worst I dare say of him is, that I think he is mistaken in his philanthropy. It is demagogues and hypocrites that I denounce. It is them and their abolition hoax that I ask the Democracy to denounce.

Mr. Speaker, we have had some high times here on the subject of abolition. I have wished often that the whole American family could have been eye-witnesses of them. They would have come to the same conclusion that I have—that is, that modern abolition is a miserable and contemptible hobby, worthy of demagogues. To those who witnessed the scenes of 1837-'8, and '46, in this House, description is unnecessary. To those who did not, description is impossible. We saw wars which threatened the knife, and the knife to the hilt, between the Northern abolitionist and the Southern slaveholder. We of the West stood back and looked on, like a poor man at a dance, and called the war a tempest in a tea-pot. All that was necessary to put an end to the war for the time, was to raise a question involving a party principle or a Democratic measure, when, with wounds smarting and bleeding, abolitionists and slaveholders (Whigs) were instantly in each other's embrace. Abolition was a small matter, when "the union of the Whigs for the sake of the Union" was called for, or when the union of the Whigs for the overthrow of Democracy was called for; and in the great political contest of 1840, which resulted in the overthrow of the Democracy, we saw that union consummated—a union of the slaveholding Whigs of the South with the abolitionists of the North. The Democracy had done much in this House to quiet the South, and defend their domestic institutions. Mr. Van Buren made himself well understood on the subject of and against modern abolition. And, as a further evidence of the correct position of the Democracy, I will refer you to the course pursued by a Democratic Legislature in Ohio. The abolitionists in the State of Ohio had been engaged, to an alarming extent, in abducting slaves from Kentucky, concealing them, and transporting them to Canada.

The Legislature of Kentucky established a commission, appointed commissioners, and sent them with authority to urge upon the Legislature of Ohio the importance and necessity of taking such order as would secure the citizens of Kentucky in the possession of their property. In compliance with that commission, a law was passed by the Legislature called the fugitive law, with such provisions, penalties, and forfeitures, as satisfied the commissioners and all concerned, and, I believe, fulfilled the object of the commission. The Democracy, at that time, had a majority in both branches of the Legislature. I have not the journals; but I know that the Democracy generally voted for the law, and the Whigs generally voted against it.

In the contest of 1840, the Democracy protested against the unholy and unnatural coalition between the South and the abolitionists of the North and elsewhere. The Democracy claimed (and had no right to expect) the united efforts of the South in support of their principles, and of their party, in return for the support which the Democracy had given them and their institutions; but when support was claimed; they were answered, in substance, that, of all evils, the measures pursued by the then Democratic Administration were the greatest—we will take another time to put down abolitionism—we must first put down the Democratic party. When

(the Democracy pointed the Whigs of Kentucky to the fugitive law as a Democratic measure, and as one which the Whigs not only opposed, but denounced, the response of their stumpers was, that Kentucky could take care of her own institutions; they wanted no Ohio protection. Sir, I am more and more convinced, every day, that abolition is nothing but a miserable hobby. We have seen it introduced here expressly to make capital for home consumption. It has long been ridden as a hobby. I have seen it loaded with abolition Whigs and slaveholding Whigs from head to tail, whip and spur. I repeat, it is a hobby, used, in anti-masonry was used—to distract and divide the Democratic party. At this moment, many of the most zealous abolitionists are most zealously supporting Mr. Clay for the next presidency, who is himself a slaveholder, and in every way identified with the slave institutions of the South. Abolition was used in 1840 to overthrow the Democracy. It will be used in 1844 to defeat the Democracy. It had then no other object; it has now no other object. The abolition Whigs row one way and look another. They profess one set of principles, and practise another; while they profess to be opposed to the continuance of slavery, they unite in the support of men for the highest offices who are slaveholders, and bound to perpetuate slavery. Whig slaveholders, or their Representatives here, unite with abolition Whigs in order to make political capital for home use. I appeal to the Democracy of this House, and I wish I could appeal to the Democracy throughout this Union, to have nothing to do with abolitionism, but to scout it wherever they meet it. It was first introduced, and has since been continued, to deceive, gull, divide, and distract the Democracy. Hands off! I say, Democrats. If this demagogical sham fight is to be kept up, let it be between the abolition Whigs and the Whig abolitionists; between the slaveholding Whigs and the Whig slaveholders. Look on it with the same indifference as to which whips, as the Indian did on the fight between the kunk and the rattlesnake. Abolition was always a contemptible hobby; it is more so now when its purposes have been disclosed. It is lean, long, lank, and haggard; worthy to be ridden by abolitionists and slaveholding Whigs—political demagogues, so far as abolition is concerned.

No sound and intelligent Democrat can be an abolitionist. His attachment to the permanency and duration of the Union will prevent him. His attachment to the preservation of the sovereignty and independence of the States, will prevent him. A love for peace, good order, and the liberties of his common country, will prevent him.

Gentlemen talk here about the dissolution of the Union, in connexion with abolitionism, as if a few mistaken philanthropists swayed the destinies of his great republic and confederation. This republic stands on too firm a basis to be shaken by such influences. This Union is bound by ties too strong to be severed by an influence so small, having for its object a consideration so trifling as the mere abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. But Southern gentlemen say that the effort to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia is a mere enterprising riddle; and the object is to sever the Union, by abolishing slavery in the States. Be it so. If that is the object of the abolitionists, they have made poor headway. They have been mauling for ten years, and they have not even yet got the wedge entered, and they never will. I tell you, sir, when the question

of the abolition of slavery comes seriously to be considered by any considerable portion of this community, the people of the free States will require to be consulted. When the time comes that the negroes are all to be set free, either from the force of moral influences, patriotism, or domestic or political economy within the slave States themselves, the free States will, in part, dictate the terms. They will never consent that a wave so destructive, a cloud so black shall, be thrown over their prospects, as that which would be produced by overspreading the country with three millions of a population of such a color and such a character. I say now to the slaveholding States, that the free States will claim to dictate the terms on which they shall manumit the slaves; and those terms will be, either to send them beyond the limits and jurisdiction of the United States, or provide for them at home, and keep them within the limits of their own States. If anything could endanger this Union, it would be a refusal on the part of the slave States to comply with such terms in the event of general manumission. But let us not anticipate difficulties so great, calamities so overwhelming. I repeat, sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Our Union is in no danger; and, to keep it safe, disunion is a word which should be used with extreme caution. It is a word which should be reserved for greater and more important occasions than the mere petitioning of a mere part of a mere fraction for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. All that is required to preserve this Union, and to perpetuate it, is to permit the Federal Government to move in the orbit contemplated by our ancestors, and defined by the Constitution; to permit the States to move in their orbits, and each department in each State in its orbit, and we have nothing to fear. All this vast political fabric will move with the harmony of the great planetary system which it resembles. The wisdom of Him who made worlds directed the plan of our Government: it is the workmanship of sages and heroes. That wisdom which directs the movements and maintains the balance of worlds, will direct the movements of our Government; all we have to do is to obey, and permit our political fabric in each department, to move in the direction and in the order which its Architect intended it should, and which our own constitutions direct; but we arrogate wisdom to ourselves which does not belong to us, and exercise powers and control which the Constitution does not authorize, and which the framers of our Government never intended we should; when the Representatives of the Federal Government shall arrogate to themselves the right to interfere with the institutions of the States, to exercise powers foreign to the purposes for which the Federal Government was enacted, or to establish systems of policy which shall benefit one section of the country to the injury of another, or to benefit one class of society to the prejudice of another; or when one State, or the citizens thereof, shall assume the control of the institutions of another, or trample upon its reserved rights and infringe its sovereignty and independence,—each and all of these will be fundamental infractions; and, if persisted in to execution, must and will result in a dissolution of the Union. They will be a destruction of the compact upon which the Union was brought into existence. It becomes every patriot, every friend to his country, every lover of the human family, and of human liberty, whether in office or out of office, whether bound by oath or high princi-

ples of patriotism, to oppose every invasion, when and wherever made, upon the principles on which the sacred compact was established, or the privileges and powers which it secures as well to the States as to the citizens of the States in their individual capacity.

I say again, we have nothing to do but permit the Federal Government, and the State Governments, and the several departments in each, to move in the spheres and orbits in which their respective constitutions direct them; that being done, our Constitu-

tion is safe, our Union is safe, our free institutions are safe; but if ever this great federal planet is thrown from its balance by undue legislation, or the exercise of powers not delegated to the Federal Legislature, the result will be disunion, confusion, anarchy, and devastation; and though it may neither be the end of time nor the beginning of eternity, yet to us it will be, so far as life is worth possessing, in its effects, "the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds."

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